

Experiential Learning in the Age of AI: Case Studies from the University of Illinois

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“HOW DO I *know* that a student *actually* wrote this?!” How many times do you think a teacher has voiced that sentiment over the past twelve months? Since the release of ChatGPT to the public in October 2022, concerns about artificial intelligence (AI) and its capabilities and impact on education at all levels have been voiced by instructors in disciplines ranging from computer science to composition to history. Virtually overnight, large language models (LLMs) transformed from a little-known curiosity studied by a small cadre of computer scientists into the central pedagogical preoccupation in higher education.

Consider the following scenario, taken from a University of Illinois general education history course held in Fall 2023, but doubtlessly repeated hundreds of times since: A teaching assistant is grading a take-home essay in which students are tasked to compare two articles and place them in dialogue with lecture content. While grading, the TA starts noticing odd word choice and phrasing. Why, suddenly, are so many students describing an “intricate tapestry of human experience?” When did “delve” become such a popular verb? Does the overly serious, even highfalutin tone of an essay betray the fact

that its text is AI-generated, or simply reflect a college student's attempt to "sound smart"? As the Teaching Assistant tries to deduce whether a "human" composed the essay, even routine language and quirks of adolescent writing (such as an over-reliance on "however" and "moreover") come under suspicion. Uncertain how to proceed, and woefully behind on grading since every second essay prompts a barrage of existential questions, the TA reports their suspicion to the instructor that dozens of students used ChatGPT or similar generative AI software to write their essays. The TA's concerns are seemingly confirmed by Turnitin's AI detector, but the Turnitin report is accompanied by a litany of disclaimers clarifying that it is *not* a foolproof tool. How, then, can the TA establish textual provenance? Did the students write the essays? Where will trying to answer these questions take them?

Trusting in the law of large numbers, the faculty member teaching the course decides to feed all 205 submitted student essays into two more AI detectors: GPTZero and Sapling. Three detectors independently flag the same eighty-six essays for having a "high proportion" (50% or more) of AI-generated text. Sapling, the most aggressive of the detectors, reports probabilities of 90% and higher in thirty-six essays. The quantitative and qualitative data tell a sobering tale: almost half of all students in the class *probably* relied on ChatGPT or similar AI platforms to produce half, if not more, of the text for the key writing assignment of the semester in the course. The instructor confronts the class with this data and their personal suspicions about widespread AI usage. An anonymous class survey confirms these fears: sixty students admit to using generative AI on their final assignment.

ChatGPT is not coming—it has already arrived. With it comes a slew of challenging questions for humanities instructors. For decades already, many undergraduates have questioned not only the importance of coverage-focused survey courses centered on memorizing "foundational" historical knowledge, but also the requirement to study the humanities in any capacity. ChatGPT and other LLMs added fuel to this fire through their ability to generate responses that adequately address assignments seeking broad overviews and factual repetition. Beyond that, ChatGPT has proved sufficiently "competent" at composition and at responding, however imperfectly, to more open-ended and analytical prompts. This has

led many students to ask a fundamental question: What is the point of taking a survey course in the humanities if ChatGPT can do all of the work for me? Or rather, its corollary, why should I not let ChatGPT do all the work for me?

To answer this question and grapple with the challenges of generative AI, we must embrace pedagogical methods that reinvigorate student engagement in humanities coursework and privilege skills that AI is not equipped for. Experiential learning is among the most effective methods at meeting the challenges posed by generative AI. It prioritizes practical experience in historical inquiry, research, and writing, while providing students with engaging, collaborative projects that will lead to the creation of new knowledge. This makes the learning meaningful by immersing students in the process of historical work—they must think and act like historians to create an end product that tangibly affects the world around them. ChatGPT is well suited to generating outputs, but it is not designed to think or actively problem-solve. By centering the process of *doing* and intertwining it with *learning*, experiential learning pedagogy demands students engage with the substance of the course in ways that do not have AI-enabled shortcuts. This approach makes education tangible and meaningful to students, helping them take pride in their work and want to do it themselves. By insulating against the worst aspects of AI, experiential learning also opens the door for instructors to find a balanced way to incorporate AI into the classroom. Rather than fear or ban it, instructors can implement AI into the digital humanities toolkit, useful for aiding the process of historical interpretation, yet not replacing original inquiry. This emphasis on process and engagement makes experiential learning the best way to teach history in the Age of AI.

In this article, we will explore two specific examples from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) that provide a blueprint for learning in the age of AI. Firmly grounded in the digital humanities, but predating the advent of generative AI, Professor John Randolph's SourceLab is an inquiry-centered project based on open-access, client-based documentary publishing. Professor Robert (Bob) Morrissey's undergraduate course, "Colonial American History," borrows a laboratory framework from the sciences to guide students through collaborative, public-facing research projects partially in response to the development of generative AI. Together,

these courses offer the flexibility, historical specificity, and practical experience to protect and enhance history pedagogy in the age of AI. The article concludes by discussing the positive potential of AI in undergraduate coursework, exploring the ways that instructors can incorporate LLMs into the classroom when the core of the course is shaped around principles of experiential, process-driven historical work.

Locating AI in the Development of History Pedagogy

How should we teach history? This question has sparked fierce debate within academic circles for over a century. Initially, the majority of historians insisted that establishing a “basic knowledge” of historical facts, traditionally dispensed through lectures and assessed through exams, was necessary. Before one could master the critical thinking necessary to work as a historian, a certain amount of “foundational knowledge” had to be acquired. A *de facto* apprenticeship model developed: Students spent years acquiring baseline knowledge under a veteran instructor’s tutelage before they potentially qualified for the privilege of producing their own original scholarship. Most original historical inquiry was reserved for those at the graduate level and above. By the 1950s, this “coverage” approach solidified itself as the dominant mode of delivering undergraduate history instruction in the United States.¹ However, scholars within the past thirty years have strongly challenged the coverage model. Student retention of key facts in American history—the same facts considered “foundational” historical knowledge—has not improved over the last seventy years, despite the pervasiveness of lecture-style coursework.² The coverage model has not notably improved student content retention, nor has it inspired students to think critically and creatively about the past and its connection to the present. The realization that the coverage model has armed students with mastery over neither the content nor the disciplinary skills of history has inspired a new wave of innovation in college-level history education.

Critical of the coverage model and the *ad hoc* nature with which college education has typically been approached, a vocal contingent of historians helped create a field now known as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). SoTL attempts to professionalize the study of student learning by establishing shared methodological

standards and a robust, peer-reviewed network of scholarship.³ Covering all subjects but understanding the specific disciplinary needs of different fields, SoTL has produced a bevy of invaluable educational research in teaching history. Building off educational pioneers like John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Maria Montessori, and Jean Piaget, scholars such as Sam Wineburg and Lendol Calder challenged their students to locate primary sources and create original arguments as a core part of the everyday learning process. Their findings are that, contrary to the way history classes have typically been run, the best way for students to learn history is by *doing* history.⁴

The recent leap forward in AI technology has reignited debates about best practices in history teaching and learning. Although computer scientists had worked on developing generative AI systems for years, it was the release of ChatGPT in November 2022 that brought AI to the classroom. ChatGPT and its ilk can, at no cost to the user, produce a seemingly original essay in thirty seconds that is largely undetectable by plagiarism software.⁵ ChatGPT's increasing sophistication and wide availability demands historians grapple with a host of new pedagogical conundrums: How should educators address the possibility of widespread generative AI usage in their classrooms? How can historians convince students that the time-consuming and intellectually challenging work of generating original arguments and locating compelling evidence are worthwhile when the computer can “just do it” on its own? And what implications does the automation of core skills of historical instruction—writing and argumentation—have on how instruction should be delivered and how student work should be evaluated?

The evolution of generative AI, much like other technological leaps, upsets preconceived tenets and inspires unease because it challenges “how we have *always* done things.” However, the solution is not to ban AI, but instead to recognize its uses while educating and insulating against its worst effects. ChatGPT and similar word-based processing systems may possess considerable productive powers, but they are informed by pre-existing datasets. They draw their knowledge from a database provided by their creators, often utilizing publicly accessible books, forums, newspapers, etc. Like a calculator, AI tools can only use the data we give them. This makes generative AI adept at handling questions based around “foundational knowledge” of history.

ChatGPT is not the first digital platform to unsettle academic orthodoxy. Not too long ago, students were admonished for using Wikipedia and many syllabi included a “no Wikipedia” statement. The threat of Wikipedia-borne plagiarism impacted the design of assessments and the content of lectures. With the ubiquity of “foundational” information on Wikipedia, the basics of “who, what, where, and when” steadily took a backseat in lecture and instructors devoted more time explicating the “how” and “why”—analytical questions that Wikipedia is not as adept at answering. Since then, we have learned to live *with* and *alongside* Wikipedia, which can be used to locate peer-reviewed sources, provide a brief overview of topics to students, or simply double-check a date mid-lecture. Wikipedia required pedagogical changes to ensure it was not misused, and instead became a tool for classroom use. We must similarly adapt to generative AI.

Though we most often refer to systems like ChatGPT as AI, the more accurate term is large language models (LLMs). LLMs generate textual outputs by drawing on statistical relationships from textual documents. These tools are transformers: they take what they “know” about pre-existing combinations of words and use that to create new combinations that sound plausible. When we look underneath the proverbial hood, we find that the LLMs are mimicking human creativity by generating text one word at a time. However, because the text really is generated one word at a time, any given sentence created by ChatGPT is cohesive only insofar as the sequential individual words are connected to one another. LLMs are pre-trained and, as of now, generally incapable of accessing the most up-to-date information. However, the more information that is “fed” to them via prompts, the greater pool of information is now available to the AI to manipulate.⁶

While 2023 may have been the year when AI entered the mainstream, the technology itself is not quite so new. Systems like Google Translate or, for that matter, Google searches and Microsoft Word’s AutoCorrect are all examples of applied artificial intelligence, whose use has been normalized in most professional and academic contexts.⁷ Legal precedent exists regarding the ownership of AI-generated text. United States copyright law requires authors to be human; the text generated by machines therefore cannot be considered owned by any one person: “In the [U.S. Copyright]

Office's view, it is well-established that copyright can protect only material that is the product of human creativity."⁸ The implication of this ruling to an academic space is that a student must not represent AI-generated text as their own; otherwise, they would be guilty of academic dishonesty. What complicates the situation is that the prompts people compose are their own work and, according to copyright guidelines, the modification they make to the AI-generated text qualifies as original work. But this policy directly contradicts the standard understanding that slightly modifying someone else's text while retaining their core ideas, interpretations, or evidence qualifies as plagiarism and thereby as an academic integrity violation. Because LLMs can generate near-infinite textual responses to prompts that are neither publicly recorded, there is no way for people to conclusively confirm whether a student has plagiarized.

The discourse around generative AI in the classroom is frequently pitched in terms of "fair use" and "misuse." But what exactly constitutes "misuse"? From the perspective of academic integrity, misuse encompasses representing the "ideas" generated by LLMs as one's own, and that ranges from copying and pasting a ChatGPT-generated essay wholesale to tinkering with the specific language of an AI-generated text while retaining its core argument and reasoning. We should also think about the misuse of AI in terms of what AI is bad at doing: LLMs and generative pre-trained transformers (GPTs) know which words are likely to appear together, but they cannot understand the meaning of the words. The task of the historian is to think about sources and synthesize information. When we ask ChatGPT to summarize a text, or draw conclusions about complex processes, we are actively avoiding the disciplinary work of history. And because ChatGPT doesn't actually understand what the text means, students relying on it regularly risk incorrect and misleading outputs. ChatGPT cannot think through a text, especially when the tone of the text is ironic or satirical, or when the genre of the text challenges simple attempts at summary, such as with a poem or fragments from a diary.

The instinct to ban AI usage in the classroom is an understandable yet ultimately futile and perhaps even harmful response. So-called AI "checkers" like the AI detection feature in Turnitin or GPTZero try to flag AI-generated text, but their accuracy is dubious. Turnitin itself recently lowered their accuracy claims and added more disclaimers to

their AI detection tool.⁹ ChatGPT also has the ability to bypass many detectors by executing the prompt, “Elevate the provided text by employing literary language” on AI-generated text.¹⁰ “A recent study by engineering faculty at Stanford University has also suggested that “GPT detectors frequently misclassify non-English writing as AI generated...suggesting that GPT detectors are inadvertently penalizing individuals with limited linguistic proficiency.”¹¹ There is also the real possibility that AI detectors are prone to misclassifying prose composed by neurodivergent students and students for whom English is not their first language. And what about systems such as Grammarly, which uses an AI-enabled algorithm to “improve your writing’s cohesion, fluency and vocabulary”?¹² Would banning the use of generative AI in the classroom ban Grammarly as well? Responses to the use of generative AI based in blanket prohibition accompanied by policing student work through detection software are unrealistic and inadequate. At best, they legitimize an arms race between systems which generate and detect AI. At worst, they falsely accuse vulnerable students, degrade the trust between students and instructors, and feed into the narrative that the humanities (especially history) are out of touch with the needs and realities of contemporary students. The solution to this problem is not to stubbornly cling to outdated pedagogical methods, but to understand the limits of AI and embrace new techniques that insulate against such technology.

Combining our knowledge of experiential learning with AI’s applicability as a tool provides a potential roadmap to the type of courses we should be developing. AI systems can only write accurately about events that have a large amount of published and easily accessible sources already, and, even then, they are often limited to broad generalities. They struggle to answer specific questions or ask original ones.¹³ In other words, AI systems are perfectly tailored to answer the broad, fact-listing exams and papers most often assigned in undergraduate curricula that are concerned with “foundational” knowledge or broadly contextualizing canonical texts. Generative AI platforms are not equipped to carry out original, specific inquiry using historical methods.

The limitations of AI further reinforce the need for experiential learning because it naturally embraces the specific, inquiry-driven work that AI cannot handle. The concept of learning through doing is not new. Defined as “the process of learning through experience,”

experiential learning has been a core part of training in medicine, teaching, and the trades for decades. Within history, public historians have built their own signature pedagogy around reflective practice and experiential learning.¹⁴ The “hands-on” learning within these fields is necessarily discipline-specific and requires consistent reflection to achieve best results.¹⁵ Experiential learning is not busy work: It intentionally engages students in the same situations and cognitive processes that disciplinary experts encounter. In K-12 teaching, for example, this involves the scaffolded integration of college students into the role of full-time educators, forced to navigate the problems of lesson planning, classroom management, grading, etc. History students, then, should be similarly challenged to find sources, interpret them, and make evidence-based arguments the way historians do. Research shows that students taught in experiential ways develop more robust problem-solving skills, think more creatively, learn to work collaboratively, and become more engaged in their studies.¹⁶ Because experiential learning is context-specific and based on higher-order cognitive processes, AI cannot sufficiently approximate it.

As a result of the Information Age, the answers to the foundational questions of history are only a Google or Wikipedia search away. Generative AI has built on that and posed new questions of authorship that are near-impossible to resolve within a traditional “sage on a stage” foundational knowledge model. Rather than embrace Luddism in response, we must reorient undergraduate instruction to the disciplinary principle of history—the production of historical knowledge—and center experiential learning and collaborative scholarship that still allow for the incorporation of digital technologies and methods.

Experiential Learning in the Digital Humanities

“Digital Documentary Publishing” Course Project

Since 2015, Professor John Randolph has led a pioneering undergraduate research program within SourceLab, a digital humanities collective housed at the UIUC History Department. SourceLab seeks to explore how the historical record is being built in the age of information technology, and how this opens the historical record to

Semester	Instructor	Freshmen Enrolled	Total Enrolled (30 max)
Spring 2017	John Randolph	5	17
Spring 2018	John Randolph	6	22
Spring 2019	Saniya Ghanoui	1	11
Spring 2020	John Randolph	4	14
Fall 2021	John Randolph	10	27
Fall 2022	John Randolph	8	24
Fall 2023	Christopher Goodwin	11	24
Fall 2025	John Randolph	7	23

Figure 1: Enrollments for “HIST 207: Digital Documentary Publishing.” Enrollments are taken from the 10th day of instruction roster.

use by a broader audience. Undergraduates first encounter SourceLab in “HIST 207: Digital Documentary Publishing,” a general education course in which students work in small groups to contextualize and digitize historical sources for a wider audience. Driven by the needs of teachers, researchers, and the public at large, the goal of SourceLab is to make primary sources as accessible as possible.

As part of its mission to make historical sources more accessible to the public, SourceLab’s work is client-based. One such client, an archivist working in the UIUC Illinois History and Lincoln Collections, located a collection of letters from the McNitts, a family of rural Illinoisans who fought in the Civil War. The archivist could imagine the potential classroom and research uses of these letters, but they do not have the time or resources to investigate such possibilities themselves. This is where SourceLab steps in. A team of SourceLab historians provide background and context on a source, verify its original author and historical authenticity, and digitize the source—all at zero cost to the client. For the McNitt family letters, this meant transcribing messy cursive handwriting into legible typed transcripts, verifying the authorship, and adding context about the western theater of the Civil War. With verification and presentation taken care of, that archivist can fully process the source and help researchers use it effectively. In classroom settings,

educators can now easily incorporate the McNitt letters into their lesson plan, confident in the reliability and accessibility of the source. SourceLab clients range from public school teachers to museums to researchers seeking to learn more about an archival source. Different clients often have different needs for their sources, ranging from accurate translations of the text to simple digitization and distribution. SourceLab historians work to solve these problems and turn client submissions into an easy to use, open-access digital source.

Course Structure

The HIST 207 course is divided into two major parts (see **Appendix** for course syllabus). In the first, students gain a familiarity with the historiographic and methodological principles that inform digital documentary publishing and the historical record. In the second, students apply this training in developing a prototype of a fully digitized and contextualized primary source collection. Over the course of the semester, students acquire the critical lens, historical perspective, and technical training necessary to responsibly address client needs. The course begins with discussions of historical methodology: what is history, how has the practice of the historical discipline changed, and how has the historical record evolved over time? The course then shifts focus to analyzing the state of the historical record (archives, manuscripts, digitally borne sources) in the present and the impact that the diffusion of mass media technologies and cyberspace have had in transforming the archive. The course subsequently expands upon this historiographic foundation to provide students with a crash course in digital humanities methods and publishing. After six weeks of this foundational learning, students form groups and reach out to clients to begin creating the source prototype.

The remaining ten weeks of HIST 207 are grounded in experiential learning; students work in teams to develop their final project of creating a digital source prototype. First, they meet with clients to discuss their needs, the physical state of the source, any prior information they might have regarding source provenance, etc. From there, students use their knowledge from the beginning of the course to identify and interpret sources housed in museums and archives, and then produce an original contextual essay using the sources identified. This fundamental historical practice helps students

develop their authorial voice and engage directly in the production of history. The client-based context also helps students learn to write for a general audience without sacrificing depth; students recognize that what they are writing will need to be read and understood by the “online” public at large.¹⁷ Throughout the process, students use digital publishing technologies such as Scalar to manipulate images and text and create an easy-to-read, aesthetically pleasing final product. While they are working on this project, students must grapple with questions professional historians face daily: How do outside sources support or contradict this one? What is the best way to present the source? Is a scan of the document sufficient, or would a transcription notably enhance accessibility?

The scaffolded structure of HIST 207 helps students answer such questions. Regular classroom meetings and check-ins with the course instructor provide students with consistent constructive feedback. If students have questions about a source, difficulty mastering the Scalar platform, or are struggling to communicate with a client, they have an established support network at hand to help them. When students are expected to complete a potentially unfamiliar task for their final project, such as a transcription or a client interview, class time is dedicated to practicing and modeling that skill in a lower-pressure environment.¹⁸ By providing a practical, project-based learning experience in a supportive classroom environment, students have the freedom to work through growing pains without falling on their face.

Course Benefits

This type of environment is the perfect way to prepare students for professional careers outside of academia. After the 2008 financial crisis devastated the global economy and sent college history enrollments plummeting, many students and parents questioned how a history degree would prepare them for work in a competitive job market. HIST 207 was developed with these concerns in mind, and addresses these concerns directly by explicitly training students in useful professional skills.¹⁹ Whichever career pathway students undertake—be it in public history, teaching, law, or the corporate world—students will be required to balance multiple stakeholders while managing complex projects. The professional value of the course is also attested to by students:

Without this course, I probably wouldn't have discovered my passion for the digital humanities until much later. It's been a monumental step in my path toward finding a career where I can help museums transform their exhibits into engaging digital spaces.²⁰

In professional settings, students will be forced to juggle their disciplinary expertise with group management, client demands, and deadlines; HIST 207 is a superb approximation of that work. This is not an easy task, and students will make mistakes—but making mistakes and learning from them in practical contexts is an essential part of learning.

HIST 207 concludes with the submission of the digital source prototype. Students, however, have the opportunity to expand upon the prototypes developed for HIST 207 and prepare them for publication in the peer-reviewed edition series, *SourceLab*, hosted by the Illinois Open Publishing Network. Students eager to continue with their projects sign up for “HIST 491: Directed Research in Digital History,” which is typically organized as an independent study. Since the introduction of HIST 491 to the undergraduate curriculum, approximately 60% of students have opted to continue refining their HIST 207 projects through the HIST 491 framework. Notably, that percentage has only increased over time: 19 of the 24 students enrolled in HIST 207 in Fall 2023 continued on with HIST 491 in the Spring 2024 semester. The most enthusiastic students can continue their collaboration with the publication by joining the *SourceLab* editorial board. Student-produced editions include the McNitt family letters, medieval medical manuals, and “How's Crops, Dean?”—1932 newsreels advertising a crops-for-tuition barter program.²¹ Through this research, undergraduates meaningfully contribute to the creation of the historical record and start to develop a record of achievement beyond the transcript. The skills students develop also stay with them long after they leave the classroom. By meaningfully engaging with the research process, students improve their self-confidence and strengthen their skills as historians and writers. Students involved in *SourceLab* also express a “better understanding of the publishing process,” learn “how to interrogate” the meaning and importance of language, and are often inspired to pursue careers in public and digital history.²² The long-term personal and professional benefits of HIST 207 and *SourceLab* speak to the power of collaborative, experiential learning.

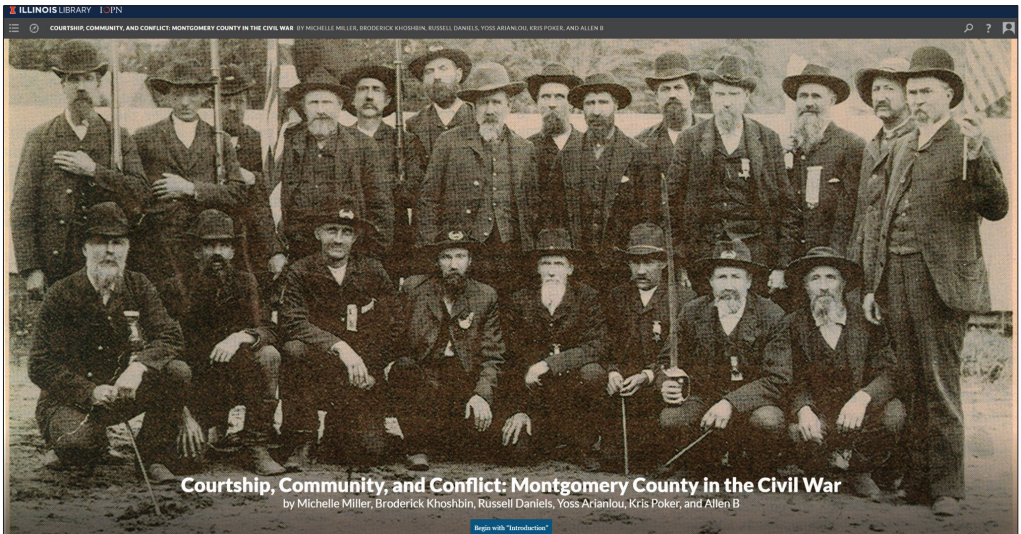


Figure 2: Front page for the “Courtship, Community, and Conflict: Montgomery County in the Civil War” edition of *SourceLab* (Vol. 1, No. 5), produced by HIST 207 and HIST 491 students.

Moreover, the success of HIST 207 and HIST 491 has inspired curricular innovation at the graduate level. By Spring 2024, Randolph offered a graduate seminar on digital documentary publishing rooted in the project-based model that was refined at the undergraduate level. The seminar provides history M.A. and Ph.D. candidates the historiographic and methodological training to publish their own digital editions and also serves as an intersection point between the undergraduate and graduate programs. Graduate students enrolled in the seminar hold joint meetings and workshops in tandem with the undergraduates enrolled in HIST 491. In a notable inversion of the traditional graduate/undergraduate student dynamic, undergraduates experienced in the use of Scalar and similar systems in HIST 207 help train and familiarize their graduate colleagues in those systems.²³

Course Advantages Regarding AI

The client-based, collaborative approach used in HIST 207 not only trains students for real-world scenarios, it also protects against the use of AI models in class. The primary sources aggregated and contextualized in a published *SourceLab* edition, while connected

to broader trends within history, are definitionally specific and previously unstudied. The scholarly study of those sources *begins* with the HIST 207 students! For example, the McNitt collection was brought to SourceLab because there was little-to-no publicly available information about it. Because AI models rely on publicly available digital datasets, this cripples their ability to produce writing in the same way they can for most general education topics. The unique nature of these sources also provokes original thoughts and questions that AI is woefully ill-equipped to address. Though dealing with one of the most studied conflicts in American history, the McNitt collection intentionally cuts against traditional narratives by centering the war's impact on rural communities and families. Because AI models are "word prediction software" trained on other people's thoughts, opinions, and words, they produce the most likely response to a question as determined by their dataset, *not* a new and unique interpretation of outside information.²⁴ This type of specific, original inquiry is already a skill that history programs want students to develop during their undergraduate training. By tasking students with producing an original and specifically contextualized collection of digital sources, SourceLab helps students realize core historical skills and engages students in the production of new knowledge.

Crucially, the SourceLab curriculum is designed in such a way as to be accessible for first-year students who, by progressing through the curriculum, start taking ownership of their role as "producers" of history. This not only inspires many to seek out further research experiences in the future, but reinforces to students the *work* of history as a generative discipline through collaboration. "Digital humanities is a constantly developing field and this class felt especially relevant to my work as a history major," one former HIST 207 student said, adding:

It gave me experience with collaborating on a long-term project and the process of publication. 207 gave each of us a clear path to publication with support the whole way, which made it so much less daunting. This class contributed to my research skills, confidence, and sense of belonging!²⁵

History departments everywhere can benefit from creating a similarly structured collaborative research seminar, aimed at first- and second-year students, which helps scaffold them into the research process. In doing so, they will simultaneously train students to think like historians and insulate themselves from AI while also developing digital skills.

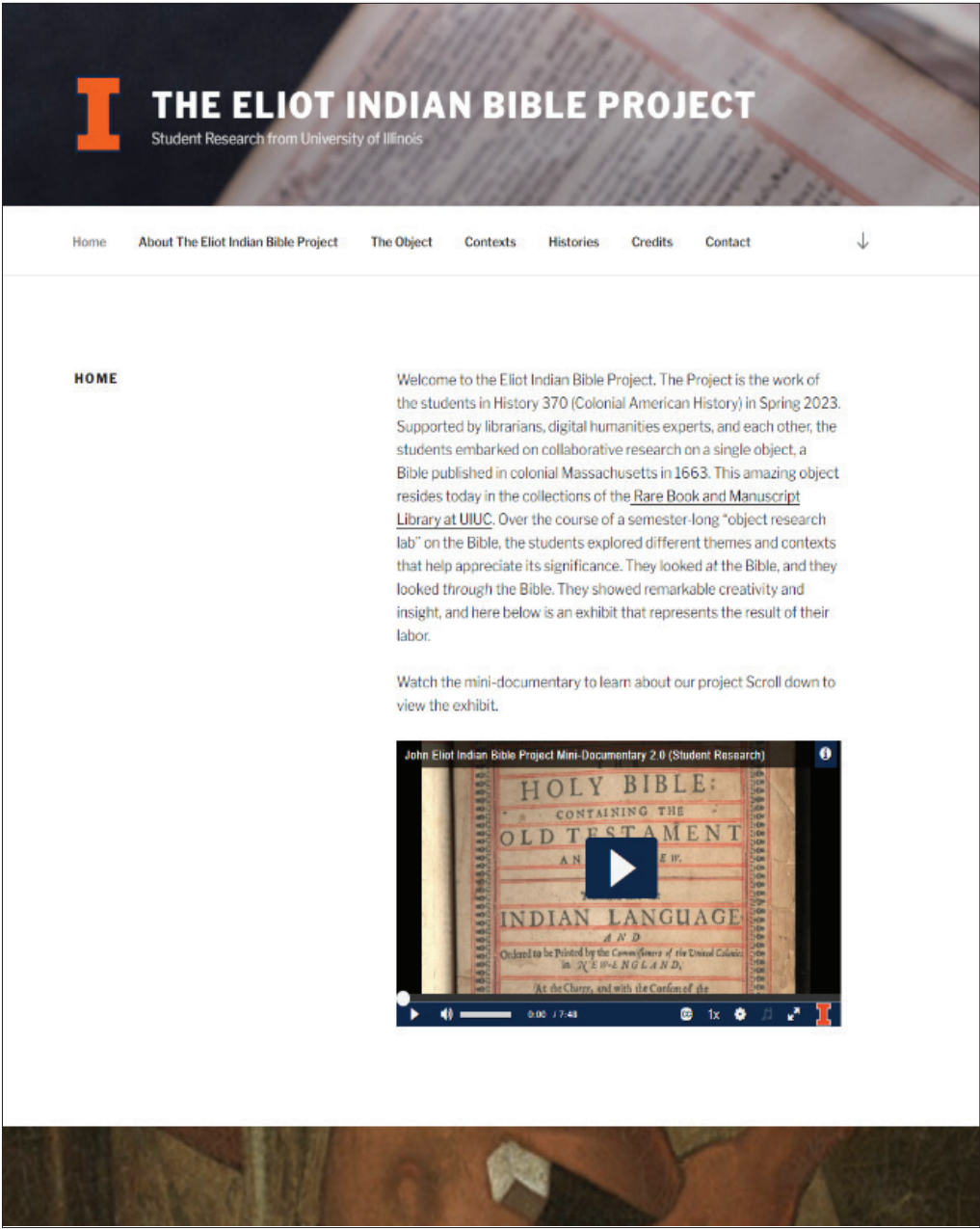


Figure 3: Home page for The Eliot Indian Bible Project, produced by Professor Robert Morrissey and HIST 370 students in Spring 2023.

“Colonial America” Course Project

More than a decade has passed since the first time Professor Robert Morrissey taught the “HIST 370: Colonial America” course at the University of Illinois in Fall 2012. Although the course enrolled well and earned positive word of mouth from students in past iterations, Morrissey remembered that students regularly found its material “more than a little dry,” especially when it got to the third lecture on Puritan religious doctrine and the intricacies of the eighteenth-century fur trade. Students found the world of Early America interesting enough, but also quite distant and, ergo, uninviting. To make the reality of lived experience in Colonial America more tangible to students, Morrissey had always relied on the collections housed at the University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML), which include the John Eliot Bible, the first Bible printed in the Western Hemisphere. Morrissey regularly organized classroom visits to the RBML for students enrolled in HIST 370 to view the Eliot Bible and to discuss its role as an artifact of early American history. This visit always achieved excellent student engagement and prompted Morrissey to consider: What if, instead of constituting a single day’s exercise, the Eliot Bible became the centerpiece of the class?

Course Structure

Morrissey started preparing the syllabus for the revamped HIST 370 course in Fall 2022. His vision, at the time, was to structure the course along a semester-term research project in which students would produce a paper inspired by the world of the Eliot Bible or its applicability as a window into Colonial America. This was around the time that conversations about ChatGPT in academia were starting to become more common, so Morrissey devised a sample experiment. He asked ChatGPT to generate a 1000-word article discussing John Eliot and his role in Colonial American history. Much to his surprise (but also to an admixture of alarm and amusement), the essay generated by ChatGPT was “Not at all bad!” If ChatGPT could produce a paper in seconds that might take a talented undergraduate more than a week to compose, he reasoned, then the assignment should be changed so that its answers could not be reasonably approximated by generative AI.²⁶

Morrissey worked closely with the staff at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library to lay the groundwork for the redesigned HIST 370 course, which he taught in Spring 2023. The revamped class design would offer students an opportunity to explore “object-based learning, grounded in the publicly engaged humanities and informed by digital methods.”²⁷ Admittedly, the thirty students enrolled in the course had their share of questions after the first day of the semester, during which Morrissey outlined his vision of the class to them. Unsurprisingly, the first question (in the words of a student enrolled in the course) was, “So, *what is* an Eliot Bible?”²⁸ The students did not need to wait long for an answer. On the second day of instruction, Morrissey led students to a tour of the RBML and introduced them to the class’s core text, inviting them to leaf through the Eliot Bible and comparable colonial artifacts. That created a material and tactile connection to the text, which Morrissey maintains was critical to the success of the course and earning the buy-in of the students. Students would visit the RBML four times during the semester, with each visit balancing a first-hand exploration of the collection with presentations by the RBML’s librarians and curators. Moreover, the visits were supplemented by a further seven digital humanities “lab sessions” and methodological workshops.

Course Benefits

The HIST 370 course intertwined history content with skill building, combining coverage of the politics, culture, and society of Colonial America with a practice-based primer in digital humanities methodology. Morrissey frequently structured units along a “learn and then practice” model: He would introduce students to a digital history tool—story maps, for example—and then assign a small project in which students created their own story maps in response to content from readings and lecture. Students were able to experiment with these methods during specially designated in-class “history lab sessions,” with Morrissey emphasizing the importance of risk-taking to students in these “experiments.” How students learned during these lab sessions, and also how they adjusted to setbacks in their projects, was oftentimes more important than what they produced. Students expanded their digital humanities toolkit through experimentation, and when it came to the final project,

they were able to choose whichever approach best fit their vision and interests.

Re-designing the “Colonial America” course to center experiential learning and the digital humanities required Morrissey to make certain “sacrifices” in terms of content. Because Morrissey was determined to make the course project the cornerstone of the class and provide students with the skills to effectively employ digital tools in historical inquiry, certain lectures and traditional readings had to be jettisoned. This required Morrissey to think deeply about what was most important for students to cover in the class, both in terms of providing them with a sufficiently robust background in the topic to contextualize their projects and to expose students to the critical historiographic trends and debates in Colonial American history. The result was a fusion of “traditional” history methods and more innovative approaches. For example, the class assigns three monographs that supplement the course lectures to provide students with a grounding in Colonial American historiography: Alan Taylor’s *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* examines the institutional foundations of early America; Jill Lepore’s *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* analyzes the creation of American identity and the critical role of indigenous peoples in early American history; and Wendy Warren’s *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* explores race and racialized slavery in New England. But, while these classic texts fill in the background of the class, the foreground is dominated by experiments with digital history methods and the born-digital final project. As a whole, the “canvas” combines inquiry-based experiential learning, digital humanities methodology, publicly engaged scholarship, and traditional book-learning in a dynamic tableaux. Throughout, students are encouraged to make connections between their own emergent scholarship and the authoritative works and approaches in the field and to begin situating themselves as producers of history in their own right.

Course Advantages Regarding AI

As the culminating assessment, students work in groups of three to four to produce a digital exhibit about an aspect of the Eliot Bible which most interests them, incorporating the digital humanities tools

they developed throughout the semester. The topics explored in these exhibits range from the use of language in the Eliot Bible to its role in the formation of American identity to the production and printing of the manuscript. Rather than present their findings via a traditional paper—which could be generated, however inadequately, by AI—students utilized new and emerging media technologies with the goal of making their scholarship accessible and engaging diverse audiences.

Morrissey's class further demonstrates the potential of partnering with local museums, archives, and libraries while encouraging public-facing scholarship, providing opportunities not possible with AI, and doing so within a structure that is accessible to students at all levels. Each institution has its own unique resources, collections, or local history to tap into and utilize as the foundation stone for a research experience. The source need not be as rare or "exceptional" as the Eliot Bible; any source or compact selection of sources thoughtfully chosen by an instructor to engage and challenge students could serve as the lynchpin of a course. The key is to center the class around a discrete object or material that the students initially encounter very much out of context. The job of the "lab" is to challenge students to see how they can use their creativity and interests to re-contextualize the object historically, *treating the source as an event*. Morrissey intentionally embraces the laboratory label, drawing on the exploratory model used in the sciences and applying it to history. The dynamic, collaborative inquiry of this course design helps budding historians acquire vital skills, and will be even more crucial in a world of ever-improving language-generating AI systems. Purposefully integrating research into various levels of the undergraduate curriculum ensures that all students will have an equal opportunity to develop critical skills in reading, writing, and research.

What matters the most, Morrissey emphasizes, are the kinds of questions students pose to and about the source, and the process they use to answer those questions. Moreover, as history teachers grapple with the impact that ChatGPT and comparable platforms will have on undergraduate teaching and learning, curricular redesigns based on inquiry processes and research assume an even greater importance. As Morrissey notes from his own web experiment, Chat GPT "can actually write a decent paper about John Eliot," but cannot

generate unexpected questions or original arguments. Purposefully integrating research into various levels of the undergraduate curriculum—and not reserving research experiences for only the most advanced students—not only enhances student experience and develops skills, but also responds to the very real concerns posed to the teaching of history by increasingly sophisticated language-generating AI systems.

Possibilities of AI in Undergraduate Teaching

Experiential courses that incorporate Randolph's and Morrissey's digital-centered approaches insulate against the worst aspects of generative AI. But they do not require completely rejecting it. Many history teachers attempt to wholly reject AI usage through a return to time-worn assessment practices such as oral exams, blue book in-class exams, quick-writes, and pop quizzes. But the capability of LLMs to quickly organize and synthesize large amounts of information should not be ignored; when utilized in the proper context, AI can be a powerful analytical and pedagogical tool.

Historians are already demonstrating how large language models can be used to enhance and build on traditional historical methodologies. In Europe, historians, computer scientists, and sociologists are utilizing AI's organizational power as part of the Venice Time Machine project, an ambitious attempt to document and categorize the material occupying over 80 kilometers of shelving in the State Archives of Venice. Researchers hope that the ability of LLMs to identify patterns in large amounts of data could combine and categorize information scattered across seemingly disconnected sources, turning the sprawling archive into an easily accessible and well-ordered digital resource. AI's ability to quickly comb through the thousands of tax records, death certificates, letters, etc., present the possibility of reconstructing entire biographies, social networks, and political dynamics over the thousand years documented in the Venice archives. If successful, this research would have major ramifications for the entire field of social history.²⁹ At a smaller scale, researchers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have demonstrated how AI can make newspapers more accessible through advanced image analysis. AI can be trained to "measure" the dimensions, shapes, and spacing of newspaper pages, quickly

identifying advertisements, pictures, etc., and then pluck them out for further study. This makes it easier to access and use newspaper images without digging through thousands of pages of text and makes finding potential patterns easier.³⁰ Projects such as these demonstrate the ways AI could enhance existing historical methodologies through its ability to sort and categorize large amounts of information.

The ongoing overlap between humanities and computational research builds on work in the digital humanities and opens exciting new grounds for undergraduate instruction. As students engage in historical inquiry, they can learn to use AI's organizational skills as a powerful tool, pushing the methodological boundaries of the field while gaining experience in practical research and writing. In a class like SourceLab, AI's burgeoning ability to locate and analyze images opens the door to larger and more complicated projects. No longer limited to a collection of family letters, students in SourceLab could begin investigating larger, more abstract collections of material. It is easy to imagine a future edition of the *SourceLab* journal explaining how cigarette advertisements changed over time, with the students' job made easier and more expansive by an AI tool's ability to sort through and deposit countless images at their feet. In a class like Morrissey's, AI also broadens the course's potential scope and impact. Presently, large databases of publicly available information, such as the U.S. Census Bureau's Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), seem daunting to students and instructors alike. But trained AI tools could help students locate patterns in the data, opening the door for larger-scale interpretations in a far shorter time frame. What might a team of twenty undergraduates and an instructor accomplish in sixteen weeks of concentrated microdata analysis? Here, AI widens the number of undergraduate-accessible primary sources, making it easier to design and deliver experiential and research-based courses across different institutions and fields of study.

Integrating exercises that test the abilities and limitations of generative AI into the curriculum could also pay dividends. For example, students could be tasked with using ChatGPT to generate a 750-word essay discussing the causes of the American Civil War. Students would then work in groups to evaluate the generated essay: How is it telling a historical narrative? *Whose* narratives and perspectives does it privilege? Does it reference primary texts and, if so, which ones? The students would then collaboratively revise the AI

essay, incorporating primary sources drawn from course readings and discussions and adding critical perspectives—those of marginalized groups such as women, indigenous peoples, and enslaved persons—that ChatGPT most likely neglected. The assignment thus serves a dual function: It is simultaneously a recollection and content mastery check for students, who use the flawed AI-generated skeleton text to review key concepts from the unit. But it also serves as a window into conversations about historiography and methodology. It invites students to critique dominant models of writing about the past that are, for lack of a better word, “trained” into the AI’s response to the prompt, as well as think about the presence and absence of voices in the narrative. Such exercises could be easily implemented in survey courses that are especially vulnerable to the large-scale misuse of generative AI by students.

An alternative approach might see instructors use ChatGPT and similar tools to create “junk” historical sources that students then analyze in terms of structure, argument, tone, and context, much the same as they would with “authentic” primary sources. The twist is that students would not be told from the start of the exercise that the transcribed “Diary of So-and-So from 1850” is not a first-hand account of the California Gold Rush, but rather a ChatGPT fabrication which took only five seconds to generate. Or perhaps the exercise could be amended to have students themselves use AI tools to generate these “invented” primary sources (they would be asked to record the prompts they used to request the outputs, and account how and why they settled on those prompts) and then either evaluate their own source or a peer’s. Such an exercise might lead to productive joint thinking and discussion about the authenticity and provenance of the texts, the importance of close textual analysis, the increasing ubiquity of “deep-fakes” in cyberspace, and even questions of authorship. More generally, as communities and governments seek to establish rules and regulation for the governance of large language models, it would be beneficial for humanists to enter these debates with an understanding of the systems involved and the capacity to place them into a historical framework of understanding.

Examples such as these demonstrate a balanced, forward-looking approach to AI usage. When undergraduate history courses embrace experiential methods that center the process of *doing* history, the harmful effects of AI usage can be mitigated while leaving room

for its strengths to shine. Meanwhile, allowing for intentional use of ChatGPT models in the classroom allows instructors to flip the conversation from AI as a substitute for historical interpretation into AI as a vehicle for entering meaningful conversations about the work and methodology of history. In such environments, large language models can morph into a valuable tool for historical interpretation.

Conclusion

The rise of generative AI requires rapid adaptation. Its widespread accessibility and utility allows students across higher education to complete traditional assignments with minimal thinking or effort. This unfettered AI usage denies students the ability to practice and learn critical thinking and writing skills. Historians must change their pedagogical methods in response. Much like Wikipedia forced historians to change the type of questions they were asking, historians must now adapt their pedagogical methods if we seek to protect against the dangers of widespread irresponsible AI usage. College educators shifted their approaches to accommodate for the Information Age. They must do so again for AI.

The challenge of responding to AI is rooted, among other factors, in the reality that the technology and its capabilities are not static. The informal systems that we have developed thus far to identify AI-generated language, such as increased attentiveness to repetitive language and the sterile tone of AI-generated writing, might very well be outpaced by the sophistication of the technology and the savviness of students utilizing it. Subsequently, a sustainable response to AI requires reconfiguring the content and deliverables of undergraduate instruction along the principles of original inquiry, a skill set that is beyond the capabilities of even the most sophisticated AI.

Experiential learning is the best way to develop these necessary skills. Research has consistently shown that students learn best through doing, not being lectured at.³¹ By emphasizing practical training in historical inquiry, research, and writing, the learning process becomes intertwined with the work students are doing. This creates a meaningful connection between students and their work, as they are empowered to think and act like professional historians. Additionally, by engaging with the historical problem-solving process and producing something that tangibly impacts the world

around them, experiential learning addresses undergraduate concerns about the “point” of history courses beyond rote memorization. Because generative AI can only produce an end-product and cannot problem-solve, this emphasis on process also protects against AI shortcuts. Programs like ChatGPT are not designed to “think” or work through original or unique problems. Thus, the practical element of experiential learning insulates against the harms of AI usage, allowing for its usage as a tool for teaching and interpretation while simultaneously preparing students to approach problems outside of the academy. It is this combination of process-based learning, hands-on experience, and student empowerment that makes experiential learning the best answer to the rise of AI.

There are still challenges inherent in an experiential approach, including in the models that we have shared in this article. How might collaborative and experiential history be scaled up—perhaps to the 200-plus student general education lecture course we discussed in the introduction—without massively increasing the workload of instructors and teaching assistants? The success of Randolph’s “Digital Documentary Publishing” course demonstrates the sustainability and attractiveness to students of a collaborative and inquiry-based course in the general education curriculum. Students at the start of their history “career” are indeed capable and eager of undertaking experiential and inquiry-based learning. Morrissey’s “Colonial America” course combines foundational disciplinary approaches with a long-term project expanding on those foundations, and this model could be reconfigured at scale (albeit, with alterations appropriate to institutional setting and need). The models described in this article suggest some pedagogical techniques that respond effectively to the threat of generative AI, yet they are embedded into smaller classes averaging twenty to thirty students, which limits their direct transferability to the large, general education classroom. The next challenge is to glean the appropriate lessons from these models and adjust them to greater economies of scale. There, much work remains. It is our hope that by sharing some of the successful Illinois models, we might contribute to this important conversation and encourage others to join as well. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that generative AI leads to pedagogical innovation, rather than the demise of history teaching.

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Appendix: HIST 207 Course Syllabus

HIST 207: Digital Documentary Publishing

Instructor: Prof. John Randolph, Dept. of History

Course Moodle Site: <https://learn.illinois.edu/>

Office Hours: Fridays 11:30 a.m.-1:50 p.m., or by appointment

Course Description

People study the past by asking questions of surviving records: the documentary ‘sources’ from which we build our understandings of what was and what happened. HIST 207 is a general education course that introduces students to the evolving craft of publishing such sources: a craft called ‘documentary editing.’ In particular, we will focus on how this old practice is changing in our era of digital communication. What sort of historical record is being built today using information technologies and social media? How can we make help make this new historical record more useful to anyone interested in the past?

This course combines both theory and practice. In the first part of the course, we’ll cover basic methodological questions surrounding documentary editing. In the second part, we’ll work with real-world clients to create new prototype digital editions of historical sources, in responses to their needs.

A stand-alone course, HIST 207 satisfies the University’s *Humanities: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives* general education requirement. It also serves as an introduction to the work of the student-run Digital Humanities collective SourceLab, which focuses on the future of the past.

The prototype digital editions we will be building in this class are your main assignment for the course. But they are also an opportunity to become published authors! SourceLab runs a peer-reviewed, open-access journal (published by the Illinois Open Publishing Network [IOPN]), titled *SourceLab*. You and your fellow co-authors are encouraged to seek publication in our journal should you wish.

What’s more, you can earn Independent Study credit for doing so next Spring, through our course HIST 491 (“Directed Research in Digital History”). I’ll be talking more about this possibility as the term goes on. It’s a great way to build your resume, get a first publication, and allow others to benefit from your research.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will have:

- Studied foundational concepts in documentary editing and considered how they are developing in the digital age;
- Learned how to describe, research, and contextualize primary historical sources;
- Developed digital publishing skills in content development, project management, and client relations;
- Produced a prototype digital documentary edition, which they can seek to publish.

Required and Recommended Readings

All course readings will be made available online, through our Course Moodle (see link above). Please see below for more about how to read our materials and prepare for class. If you are thinking of a career that involves lots of writing or researching, I would highly recommend this book, which will also be useful for this course:

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. FitzGerald. *The Craft of Research, Fourth Edition*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

The Craft of Research is an amazingly useful guide to conceiving, conducting, and finishing a research project. It also includes guidelines on style and scholarly citation, adapted from the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Required Technologies (and Technological Hazards)

This course requires the use of a laptop or desktop computer, though almost any contemporary model will do. If you do not have access to a reliable computer, contact the instructor about options.

Please bring your devices to class as necessary, whether to work on them or to use them to access course materials. That said, remember that screens can also be a harmful distraction. Please do not degrade our common time by engaging in non-course related activities (social media, texting, e-mailing, etc.) on any electronic devices you use during class.

Note on Readings

Electronic distribution generally makes documents cheaper and more accessible, but not necessarily easier or more memorable to read. (A huge issue, incidentally, for electronic publishing!) I expect you to read

documents available electronically as carefully as you would documents that you have in front of you in print. Take good notes. You may find it necessary to print some of our readings to read them well. I recommend that you do so.

Course Requirements

- Faithful attendance, reading, and constant participation in class discussions. Unexcused absences will be penalized in the attendance and participation grade.
- Independent work outside of class, and beyond the specific items listed in the syllabus, toward our common objectives.
- Commitment to uphold your responsibilities as part of a team, which in particular means attending class whenever group work time is allotted.

Calculation of Grades

Grades will be based on assignments, according to the following proportions. Assignment due dates are provided below. For submission guidelines, see instructions on format (below) as well as the instructions provided for the individual assignments.

Attendance and Participation — 15%

This is a workshop course, and constant attendance and dedicated participation are critical. You should seek to make a contribution every week (see below on participation methods). I will provide feedback on your in-class work across the semester. I distribute an attendance sheet sign-in sheet every day, please make sure to sign it.

Two Short Paper Assignments (3-4 pages each) — 15%

- First Short Paper (5%): Due **9/2 (draft)** and **9/7 (final submission)**
- Second Short Paper (10%): Due **9/23**

Transcription Assignment (Transcribe a short portion of text) — 5%

- Due **10/10**

Contextual Research Essay (6-7 pages, plus bibliography) — 20%

- Due **10/28**

Prototype Critique (Review of one other group's prototype) — 10%

- Due in class by sign-up, sometime between **11/28-12/5**

Final Project — 35%

Your assignment will be to work with a group of your classmates to create a prototype digital documentary edition. This assignment will have some collectively graded group elements as well as individual elements.

See the Final Project Guidelines, also distributed on 9/22, for details. These instructions will describe the steps of your final project.

As scheduled in the syllabus, your group work on the Final Project will include six components (all of which will contribute to this portion of your grade):

- FP 1: Draft Mission Statement — Due **10/5**
- FP 2: Client Interviews and Notes — Due **10/17**
- FP 3: Metadata Worksheet — Due **11/9 and 12/5**
- FP 4: Revised Mission Statement and Work Plan — Due **11/2**
- FP 5: Final Project Draft — Due **11/28-12/5, by sign up**
- FP 6: Final Prototype — Due **12/14, by 5 p.m.**

The complete Final Prototype (FP 6) will be due no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, December 15, via electronic submission.

Based on points awarded, grades will be scored and calculated on the following, common scale:

A+ (97-100)	B+ (87-89)	C+ (77-79)	D+ (67-69)	F (0-59)
A (93-96)	B (83-86)	C (73-76)	D (63-66)	
A- (90-92)	B- (80-82)	C- (70-72)	D- (60-62)	

Guidelines for Attendance and Participation

Active participation in our discussions and all our group work is an important part of the grade for this course, since one major course goal is to improve your ability to master critical concepts and develop them in conversation with others. This does not mean, however, that the people who talk the most are the best participants! Instead, try to participate at least one time each week in one of the following fashions:

- *Ask* a question, preferably one that clarifies or deepens discussion.
- *Respond* to what someone else has said (almost any response makes the discussion better, so feel free to say things like “Hunh?” “What?” and “So are you saying that...”)

- *Offer an observation* about course material that tries to advance the discussion.
- *Volunteer* to take on group tasks, but also seek to equitably *define* and *share* group work.

Your participation grade will be determined by how well you balance these roles, and the degree to which your work helps everyone work better. I will provide a mid-course evaluation of your participation, to give you some feedback and also to give you a sense of how you are doing in this respect. Please see me should you have any concerns about your participation grade.

Guidelines for Written Work

Specific instructions for each writing assignment will be passed out separately. Unless otherwise noted, all writing assignments should meet the following guidelines. Assignments that do not meet these standards may be rejected.

Format

- All written work should be typed (word-processed), double-spaced, in 12-pt. font. Please put your name at the top, and number all pages.
- *References to sources of interpretation, fact, and evidence should always be duly noted, with footnotes.* (Also see below on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity)
- Footnotes should be formatted as follows:
 1. In your personal essays, references to course texts should consist of the author or editor's name, a brief title, and page number (Examples: Martin, *Medieval Russia*, 5; Pouncy, *How the Other Half Lives*, 123).
 2. The texts of the bibliography and footnotes developed for your editions should conform to the guidelines given in the SourceLab Handbook, which in turn are based on "Chicago Style" (a link to the *Chicago Manual of Style* online version is on the Moodle).

Deadlines

- All assignments are to be submitted in paper at the beginning of class on the date specified in the syllabus unless otherwise noted.
- No late work will be accepted without the instructor's approval.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

The University of Illinois has high standards of academic integrity set out in Article 1, Part 4 of the University Student Code, which I uphold. All written coursework in this course is expected to be your own with all words and/or ideas from other sources fairly attributed. To use phrases and/or ideas from any other source as if they were your own constitutes plagiarism. Submitting your own work for more than one course without permission of both instructors is also considered a form of academic dishonesty.

The University Student Code sets out possible consequences of plagiarism in coursework, ranging from failure on the assignment to suspension or dismissal from the University. The Code specifies that ignorance of these standards is not an excuse. All cases of plagiarism are reported and recorded with the student's department, college, and the college where the infraction took place. All students in this class should familiarize themselves with the Code at <https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-402/>.

Disability-Related Academic Adjustments

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign; call 333-4603; e-mail disability@illinois.edu; or go to the DRES website.

Course Schedule and Bibliography

NB: All readings are described below using short titles, with full references given in the Course Bibliography (posted on the Course Moodle). Unless otherwise specified, you should read the whole item and be prepared to discuss it on the day given.

All readings will be distributed electronically via our Course Moodle.

Class Schedule

Unit One: History and its Sources, Yesterday and Today

M 8/22: Mutual Introductions

- Syllabus distributed.

W 8/24: About the Course: The Syllabus, Digital Documentary Publishing (a.k.a. ‘Editing’), and SourceLab

- Read: * Syllabus; * Baraniuk, “What Will Today’s Data tell Future Historians?”; * Randolph, “SourceLab: An Idea”; * Marcotte and Villanueva, “Red Cross Works on Mutilés (1918).”
- Reference to Consult: * SourceLab Handbook (this is a link to have handy going forward; no specific reading for today).

F 8/26: History and Sources: Classical Concepts

- Read: * Becker, “Everyman His Own Historian”; * Howell and Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources* (excerpt).
- *Discussion Questions*: How does Becker define history? Do you agree? How do historians define and categorize ‘sources,’ and what role do they play in making history?

M 8/29: History, its Sources, and Power: A Modern Critique

- Read: * Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* (excerpts).
- *Discussion Questions*: How does Trouillot critique classical historical method? How does he understand the relationship between sources and history? Do you agree?
- First Short Paper Assignment discussed.

W 8/31: Case Study: The Day the Music Burned

- Read: * Rosen, “The Day the Music Burned.”
- *Discussion Questions*: What happened to the history of music in the U.S. on ‘the day the music burned?’ What was lost, and what wasn’t? Why?

F 9/2: Writing Workshop: Revising for Style

- Read: * Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, Chap. 17 (excerpts).
- **First Version of First Short Paper Assignment due.**

M 9/5: Laboratory (No Class)

W 9/7: The New Historical Record, Take One: Historians and the Rise of the Internet

- Read: * Rosenzweig, “Scarcity or Abundance?”; * McLemee, “It Seemed Like a Good Idea”; consider the role of digital media in your own life, and the degree to which it is or is not preserved.
- *Discussion Questions*: How has the rise of digitization (and the ‘digital transformation’ of culture) changed the way we explore the past? Are digital ‘sources’ different from analog ones? How? How much has the situation changed in the nearly 20 years since Rosenzweig wrote this famous essay on the topic?
- **Final Submission of First Short Paper Assignment due.**

F 9/9: Case Study: ‘Documenting the Now’: Creating and Preserving Records in an Age of Social Media

- Read: * Peet, “DocNow”; * Website, “Documenting the Now” (read around the website to get a sense of where this initiative has gone since its 2016 inception); * “DocNow V1.0 User Demonstration” (video).
- *Discussion Questions*: What seem to be the key concepts underlying the ‘Documenting the Now’ initiative? How does it approach the question of archiving Twitter? What sort of historical record is it producing of this moment in human communication?
- If you’d like to download and experiment with the Documenting the Now tool, go for it! Perhaps there are Twitter trends you’d like to archive before they disappear.

Unit Two: Publishing the Past in the Digital Age: An Introduction to Digital Documentary Editing

M 9/12: Preserving and Publishing the Past Before the Internet: ‘Archives’ and ‘Editions’

- Read: * Oxford English Dictionary, “edition, n.”; * Stark-Gendrano, “Scholarly Edition” [in both of these cases, for your ease of reading, I’ve made PDFs that are cut-and-paste versions of library resources available electronically at UTUC; you can log in to both through our Library’s website as well.]
- Second Short Paper Assignment discussed.
- Copies of print editions shared.

W 9/14: Publishing Documents: Goals and Standards in Documentary Editing

- Read: * Burg and Stevens, “Introduction”; * Association for Documentary Editing, “Minimum Standards for Electronic Editions.”

F 9/16: Workshop: Discussing Digital Documentary Editions

- You will find a special file on the Moodle containing links to a few new digital editions of historical sources. Examine these resources, as described in the Second Paper Assignment.

M 9/19: Introduction to the Final Project

- Final Project Guidelines distributed.
- Final Project Options introduced.

W 9/21: Discussing the Projects and Creating the Groups

- Read: * Final Project Descriptions.
- **By Tuesday evening, send me a list of your top three options for the final project, via e-mail.**

F 9/23: Getting to Know Your Team and Familiarizing Yourself with Your Project

- Registration Key for Scalar distributed (by this date, if not before).
- **Second Short Paper Assignment due.**

M 9/26: Getting to Know our Editorial Template and Publishing Platform on Scalar

- Read: * Scalar Overview (video); * SourceLab Handbook, Section 2.1 (‘Content Guidelines’); * Scalar, “Welcome, Getting Started, Quick Start”; * Edition Template.
- We will develop a ‘shell’ for your prototype together in class. Please make sure your group has at least one shareable laptop or tablet.

Unit Three: Studying Your Source and Imagining its Place in History

W 9/28: Creating Context: Understanding Your Source and Imagining its Biography

- Read: * Gosden and Marshall, “The Cultural Biography of Objects.”
- Contextual Research Paper Assignment distributed.

F 9/30: Preparing for Client Interviews and Developing Mission Statements and Work Plans

- No reading; critical, in-class group work. Come to class!
- Topics for Contextual Research Essays determined (in consultation with group).

M 10/3: Copyright Research and Evaluation

- Special Guest Presentation by Prof. Sara Benson (University Library).
- Read: * Smith, *Owning and Using Scholarship*, 1-34; * Michigan Copyright Review Management System Flowchart (developed by the University of Michigan). * Exploring the Concept of Fair Use (video by Sara Benson).
- Reference Resource: * “Copyright Term and the Public Domain in the United States.”

W 10/5: Representing Text: Principles of Transcription

- Read: * Stevens and Burg, “General Principles of Transcription.”
- Transcription Assignment distributed.
- **FP 1: Draft Mission Statement due** (see Final Project Guidelines).

F 10/7: Conducting Library Research: Databases and Print Collections

- Details TBD. For this session, we will meet in the University Library

M 10/10: Client Interview / Group Work

- We will be using this time to meet either in-person or by Zoom with clients.
- You should throughout this period be gathering information for your Contextual Research Essays.
- Unused class time will be given over to groups to discuss progress on your essays and preparing for/processing your Client Interviews.
- **Transcription Assignment due.**

W 10/12: Client Interview / Group Work

- We will be using this time to meet either in-person or by Zoom with clients.

- You should throughout this period be gathering information for your Contextual Research Essays.
- Unused class time will be given over to groups to discuss progress on your essays and preparing for/processing your Client Interviews.

F 10/14: Client Interview / Group Work

- We will be using this time to meet either in-person or by Zoom with clients.
- You should throughout this period be gathering information for your Contextual Research Essays.
- Unused class time will be given over to groups to discuss progress on your essays and preparing for/ or processing your Client Interviews.

M 10/17: Annotating Your Source: Principles of Annotation / Technological Possibilities in Scalar

- Read: * Stevens and Burg, “Principles of Annotation”; * Scalar User’s Guide: Annotations.
- **FP 2: Notes on Client Interviews due (unless interview has been delayed).**

W 10/19: Sharing Your Research So Far

- You’ll discuss your findings in your project teams, identifying where you need to build your research in the time remaining (before the essay is due next week).
- I will be hosting extended office hours today to discuss your Contextual Research Essays (3 p.m. - 5 p.m.). Please note that these office hours are instead of Friday’s this week.
- **Initial Bibliographies and Conclusions due** for Contextual Research Essay (see assignment).

F 10/21: Writing and Group Consultation Day

- Your Contextual Research Essays will be due next Friday. Please take this day to work on this assignment, adding to your research as necessary. No class or office hours this day (see above for information about extended office hours, 10/19).

Unit Four: Creating Your Prototype Edition

M 10/24: Working with Media and Content in Scalar

- Read: * Scalar User's Guide, sections "Working with Media" and "Working with Content"; * Scalar Cheat Sheet.
- Please make sure your group has at least one shareable laptop. We will try to upload a media file of your source, if one exists.

W 10/26: Documenting Your Source: Gathering Metadata for Your Edition

- Read: * Pomerantz, *Metadata* (Introduction); * SourceLab Handbook, Sections 3.2-3.4 (Metadata Guidelines); * SourceLab Metadata Worksheet.
- FP 3: Metadata Worksheet discussed.

F 10/28: Revising Your Mission Statement and Creating a Work Plan for the Final Project Draft

- FP 4: Revised Mission Statement and Work Plan discussed.
- FP 5: Final Project Draft discussed.
- **Contextual Research Essays due.**

M 10/31: Writing Your Edition, Part I: Opener, Introduction, Abstract

- Read: * SourceLab Handbook, Section 2.1 Content Guidelines.
- Discussion of procedures in creating 'paper draft' of edition.

W 11/2: Writing Your Edition, Part II: 'About this Source' and 'About this Edition'

- Read: * SourceLab Handbook, Section 2.1 Content Guidelines.
- **FP 4: Revised Mission Statement and Work Plan due.**

F 11/4: Group Work: Outlining Textual Sections

- Read: * Booth et. al., "Storyboarding."

M 11/7: Group Work: Planning Your Source's Presentation

- In class, we will discuss how you are presenting your source within the edition. Please experiment with presentation options (different views using the menus in Scalar) before you come, so that we can select among a few options.

W 11/9: Metadata, Part II: Reviewing Your Data and How to Enter It in Your Edition

- **FP 3: Metadata Worksheet due (first date).** See FP 3 for more details. Please make sure that at least one person in your group brings a laptop or tablet for our work.
- I will be holding extended office hours this day (3 p.m.-5 p.m.) to work with your groups and consult on metadata questions.

F 11/11: Research and Writing Day

- This is a free work day, for your group to use as you see fit. Instead of class, I will hold extended office hours on Wednesday, (3 p.m.-5 p.m. as described below). I would be happy to meet with your group in or outside these office hours, by appointment.

M 11/14: Citations and Footnotes

- As a general reference, again, citations and footnotes should be written following the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- We will cover how to enter footnotes into your Paper Drafts in class.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY: PRESENT YOUR PROJECT AT THE HISTORY SHOWCASE

W 11/16: Final Group Work session before break.

- Please come so you can discuss with your group how to handle all remaining steps for the creation of your Final Project drafts, due by sign up either during or just after break.

F 11/18: Work Day

- No class or office hours. Consultations with instructor by appointment.
- **FP 5: Final Project Drafts due**, which should be posted to Project Draft Forum for viewing according to agreed schedule and **no later than two full days before your presentation** (See Final Project Guidelines).

Fall Break 11/19-11/27 — No Class

M 11/28: Prototype Presentation

- See Final Project Guidelines.
- **Prototype Critiques due by sign-up.**

W 11/30: Prototype Presentation

- See Final Project Guidelines.
- **Prototype Critiques due by sign-up.**

F 12/2: Prototype Presentation

- See Final Project Guidelines.
- **Prototype Critiques due by sign-up.**

M 12/5: Prototype Presentation

- See Final Project Guidelines.
- **Prototype Critiques due by sign-up.**
- **FP 3: Metadata Worksheet due (second date).**

W 12/7: Last Day of Class

- Discussion of publication options for your work, including our peer-reviewed series, *SourceLab*.
- Questions about FP 6: Final Prototype.

W 12/14: Final Prototype Submission

- **FP 6: Final Prototype due by 5 p.m. Wednesday, December 14.**
(See Final Project Guidelines)